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CEREBUS LATTER DAYS 3

LO THERE SHALL COME THREE WISE FELLOWS

268
JUL

AARDVARK COMMENT

Michael Mooney,
28 Stokesley Grove
High Heaton,
Newcastle upon Tyne,
England NE7 7AU

Dave,

Two letters on 265: short one for the front, and something a bit longer for the back, since I don't want what will be a hard-nosed adversarial commentary intruding on the feelings I had for part 34 of *Going Home*.

Frankly, I was moved by this issue. It had the sort of physical, yawning in the pit of my stomach pain that only the best, most direct work can cause. I had assumed there would be problems when Cerebus brought Jaka home to Maw and Paw, but hadn't seen what was, really, a very foreseeable tragedy. I feel bad for the little cuss, and I winced very hard at the oblivious way he lost Jaka, tied up in his own despair, and having no awareness of the consequences of his dismissal.

One niggle, though, is that these actions aren't usually so irretrievable—having the coach standing by was too convenient, although you could argue that Jaka has always had that option. And if they've found Missy, of course, then they've found the gun.

After this issue, the prospect of Cerebus dying alone, unmourned and unloved seems very real, and very immediate. I hope you don't make it too hard on the wee bastard—while he was off being Prime Minister, and Pope, and indulging acquired tastes, he lost his home and his family. It could happen to the best of us.

For the first time ever I'm reluctant to pick up the next issue, not because of anything at the back of the book, but because I really don't want to see a funny-animal character I've known for so long in so much pain.

Cheers,
Michael

You're perfectly entitled to read Cerebus any way you want, Michael (part of the price of admission), but I would scarcely say that Cerebus lost Jaka in an "oblivious way". Quite the contrary. For the first time he was able to see Jaka precisely as she was and as she is and as she always would be: a spoiled, myopic, insensitive, self-absorbed and self-important harlot princess (quite apart from her position in the hierarchy of the city-state of Palnu). It was entirely his choice, of course, as these things always are, but while he was passing time with a spoiled, myopic, insensitive, self-absorbed and self-important harlot princess, his father died alone and in the company of mere friends and mere neighbours. A loss of personal honour on the part of Cerebus that is almost unimaginable in an environment where such things matter (to say the least) a great deal. Not only do such things not happen "to the best of us," it is (in my experience) precisely the choices one makes in these situations which establishes the irrefutable line of demarcation between "the best of us" and "the rest of us". Personal honour demands that a son is there for his father (so long as one's father wants the son to be there. In the case of an estrangement chosen by the father, personal honour demands that the son stay away unless or until he is summoned by his father). Depending on one's standards (or lack of same), one participates in

Continued in back...

CEREBUS
NO. 268 JULY 2001

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Creator, Writer
Characters/
pencil & ink,
mechanical tones,
lettering

GERHARD
Background
Artist/pencil & ink

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KEN SIM
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LATTER DAYS

•

PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 266
and 267)

•

BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 268 to
288)

•

BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 289 to
300)

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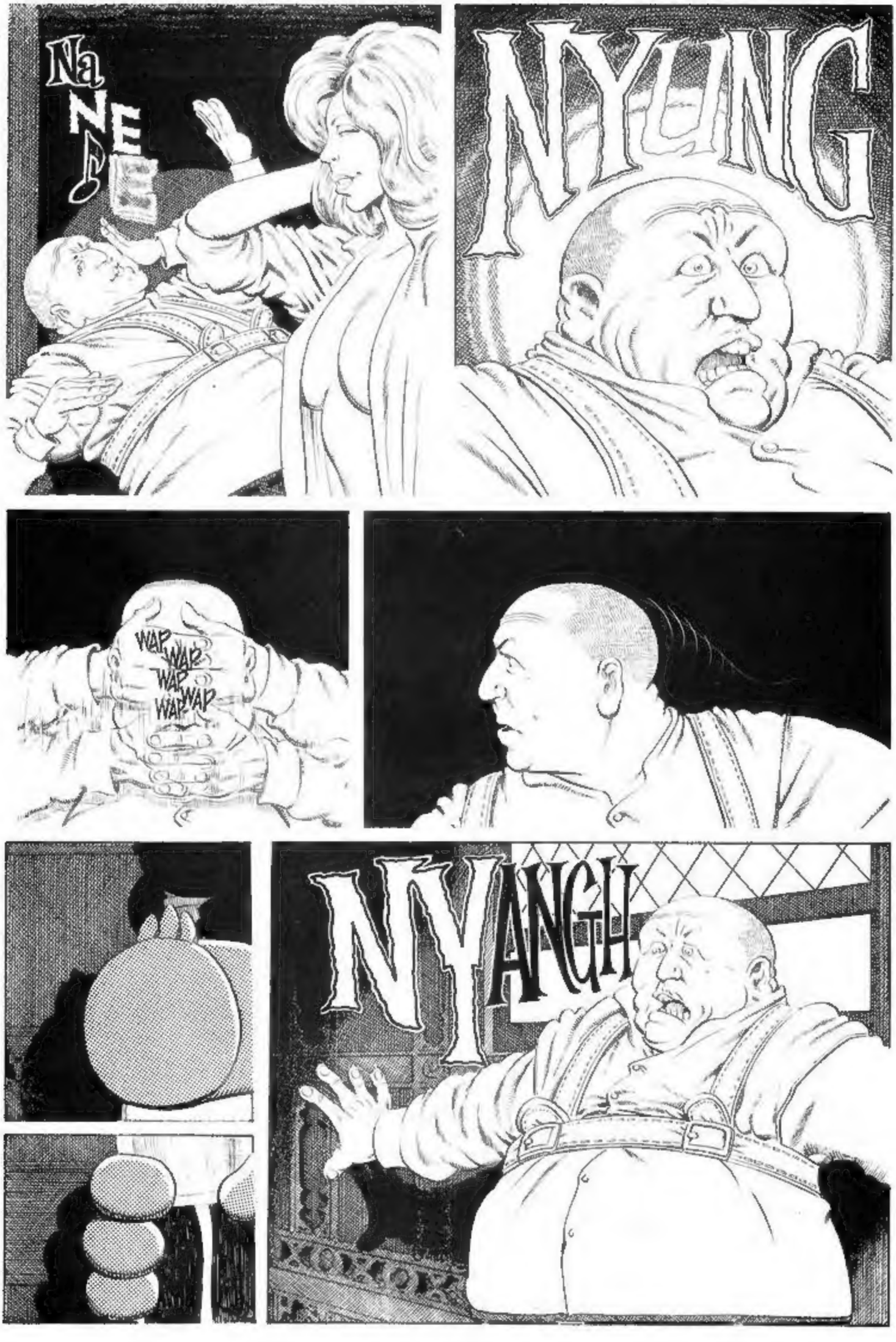
"Everyone dies in the end."
"No. In the end,
everyone is dead.
It's *not* the same thing
at *all*."

Roger Langridge
"La Journee Parfait"

Latter Days

THIS TIME, CEREBUS WAS GOING TO MAKE SURE. HE TOOK THE NOT-SO-SMALL FORTUNE HE HAD MADE FROM CHARGING TAVERNS TO NOT REPRESENT THEM AT MOOSEHAT GARDENS AND HE SUNK EVERY LAST HALF-BIT INTO OPENING HIS OWN TAVERN --WITH DANCERS -- RIGHT IN THE HEART OF CIRINIST TERRITORY.
THEN CEREBUS POSTED PROFESSIONALLY HAND-PAINTED SIGNS ON EVERY BUILDING IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.
Doesn't Your Wife Deserve A Night Home Alone Tonight?
fred's tavern
Two Blocks Thataway
GIRLS!GIRLS!GIRLS!
(And NO WOMEN!WOMEN!WOMEN!)
fred's tavern
Check Out The Breasts & Thighs On Our Chickens!
fred's tavern
Three Blocks Thataway
Pull Up A Girl And Sit Down!
fred's tavern
You're Looking Right At It!
AND THEN CEREBUS
AND THEN CEREBUS PUT ON HIS BRAND NEW TOLEDO -- POURED HIMSELF A PINT OF SCOTCH AND SAT DOWN TO WAIT FOR THE CIRINISTS TO SHOW UP.

TH' NEX' THING... AN TH' LAS' THING... CERBISS KNEW... WUZ THREE 'R NINE SCORES LADER... HE HAD JUS' MARIDGE TA GET TH' DANCING PING EPHALANTS TA "DANCE TA TH' RIGHT, FELLAS, TA TH' RIGHT" (ON ACCOUNNA WHEN THEY "HIC" DANCE TA TH' LEFT "IT MADE CERBISS A LITTLE HEIGHT-LEADED!) WHEN HA...
NaNaNaNEEEE
MWOOOAH!
NYUK NYUK
A MATER DEARIE! FOR 'LY:
A CLAYSSY CLIP JOINT!
PAWDON ME, MATER.
I SAID: "EXCUSE ME, DEARIE!"
GIMME A GOOD TABLE-- WIT' NO DOITY DISHES ON IT.
HEERE'S LOOKIN UP YER ADDRESS
OHHHH!
YOU'RE AN INMATE!
NYUK NYUK
SORRY, PAL— I THOUGHT YOU WUZ THE WARDEN!


Na
Ne
NYUNG
WAP WAP WAP WAP WAP
NYANGH

...TELL THEE TO HEARKEN UNTO THE PIMPLEBRAIN'S HARNESS STRAP FOR THREE LOUSY MINUTES...
SOME BUDDY MUSTA SHOWED HIM HOW A BUCKLE WORKS.
WELL, TOODLEY ♪OO!
OOMALEE♪ WOP!
IZZAT SO? LOSHER'S PERMIT MOSHER TO SHOW THEE ANOTHER WAY THAT A BUCKLE WORKS.
♪MAY I?
BE MY GUEST ♪
KLONK
OWW!
WOOP OOP♪ OOP♪ OOP♪ OOP♪ OOP♪ OOP♪ OOP♪
NOW ASSISTETH ME IN THE FINDING OF THE DOORKNOB-THAT-DOTH WALK-LIKE-A-MAN, LEST SOME
WAIT A SECOND
HEY MOSHIE
HEY LOSHIE
WAIT A SECOND
HERE HE COMES NOW
ERT ERT ERT

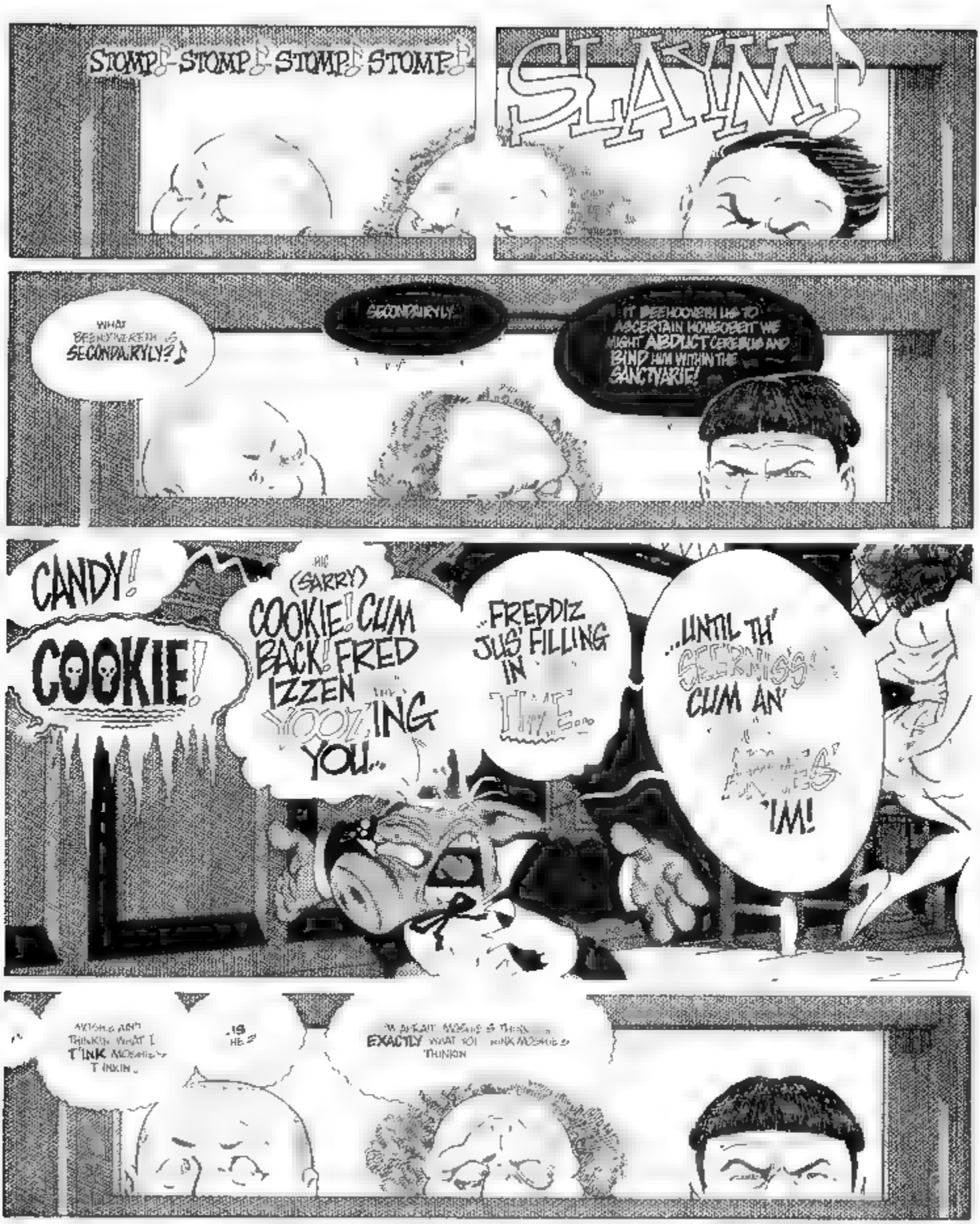
(ONE SIDE)
KOSHER!
WHAT MEANEST THOU, GERM BRAIN, IN ENTERING IN UNTO A DIVE LIKE UNTO THIS ONE?
DIDST THOU NOT PERCEIVE THAT IT WAST A DEN OF VIPERS AND OF SCORPIONS?
SHAMELESSLY DISPLAYING THEIR DEVICES AND ATTRIBUTES?
AND THEIR GREAT MELONS.
DON'T F'GET THEIR
SHMEK
WHENSOBE'IT MOSHER DESIREST TO HEAR FROM THEE MOSHER WILL RATTLE THY CAGE.
I FOUND 'IM!
I FOUND 'IM

WHAT HATH THE APPLE-BRAIN FAUND?
THE BIG "C" NYUCK NYUCK
SHMAK
WHAT SPAKETH MOSHER UNTO THEE AFORETIMES AS REGARDETH THY USE OF OBSCENE INITIALS?
NOT THAT! "C" MOSHIE!
DA BIG "C"!
CEREBUS!
CEREBUS?
CEREBUS?
TADADADA END DA DUMP

SPREAD ALIT..
LISTEN, GORGONZOLA: IF THOU ART BUT CRACKING WISE!/
I FOUND 'IM I TELL YA--
I FOUND 'IM!
CEREBUS! HERE!
PERCEIVEST THOU WHAT THIS DOTH PORTEND?
DO I?
BIMBOS A LA MODEE WIT CHAMPAGNE CHASERS...
F'BREAKF'ST LUNCH AND DINNUH..
NYUK NYUK NYUK

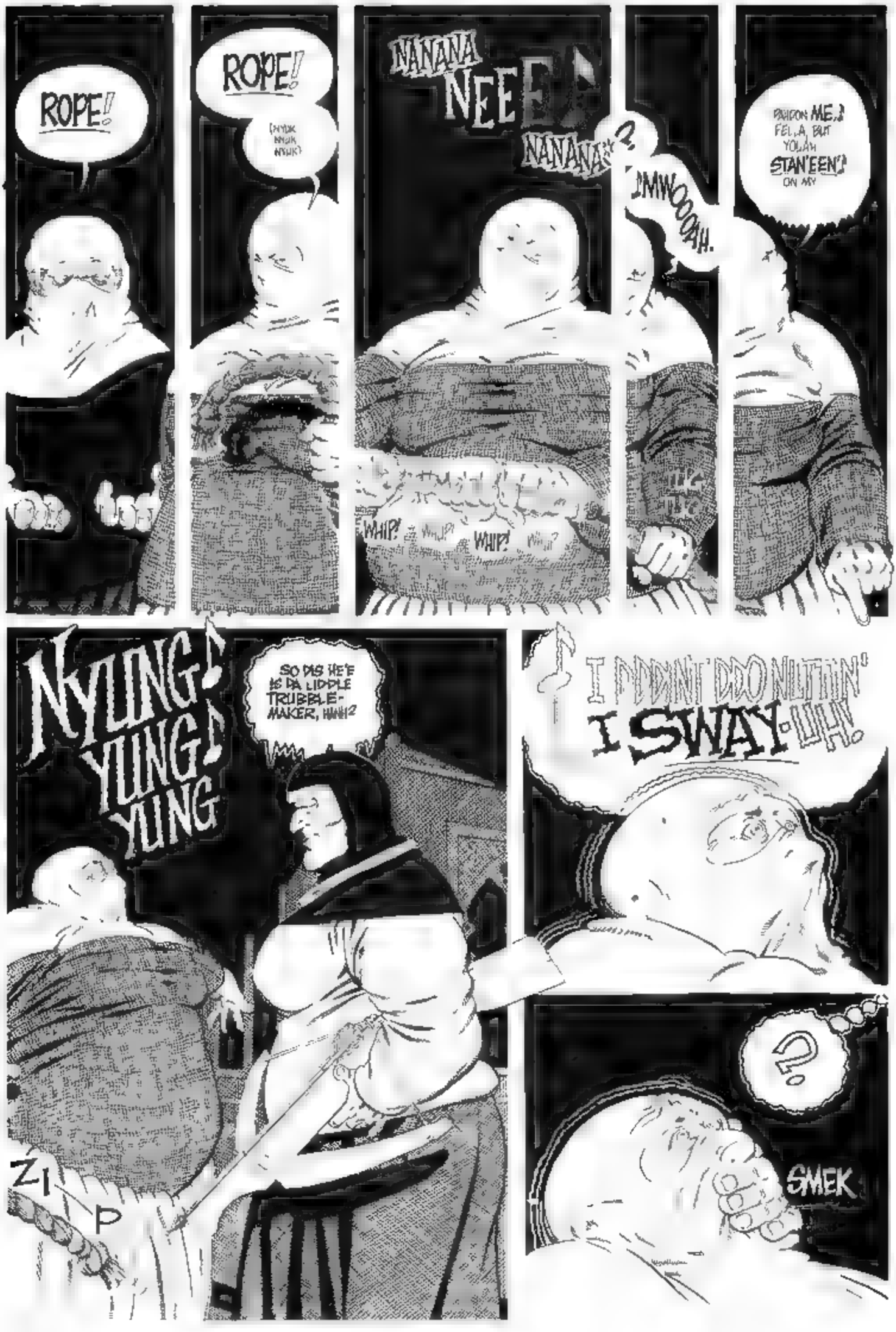
MAKEST THOU A HARD FIST.
LIKE UNTO DIS?
THAT'LL DO.
KNOCK
OW!
OW! OW! OW!
SMACK
OW!
WHADJA HIT ME FOR?
NUMB-NUT SO SORELY BETH MOSHER THAT IT SPILLETH OVER
HAST THOU A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
HOW DO YOU MEAN?
LEGALLY?
GET GOIN'
GET GOIN'
WINDAH SHOW!

COOK'E HIC MONEY VUDDER?
FED WOLVEN LAUF
STONGE EACH!
POW
CHINK
THWA
OY HAVE NEVAH -SON ...SOW
PETOAH IN MOY INTOVA LOYF!

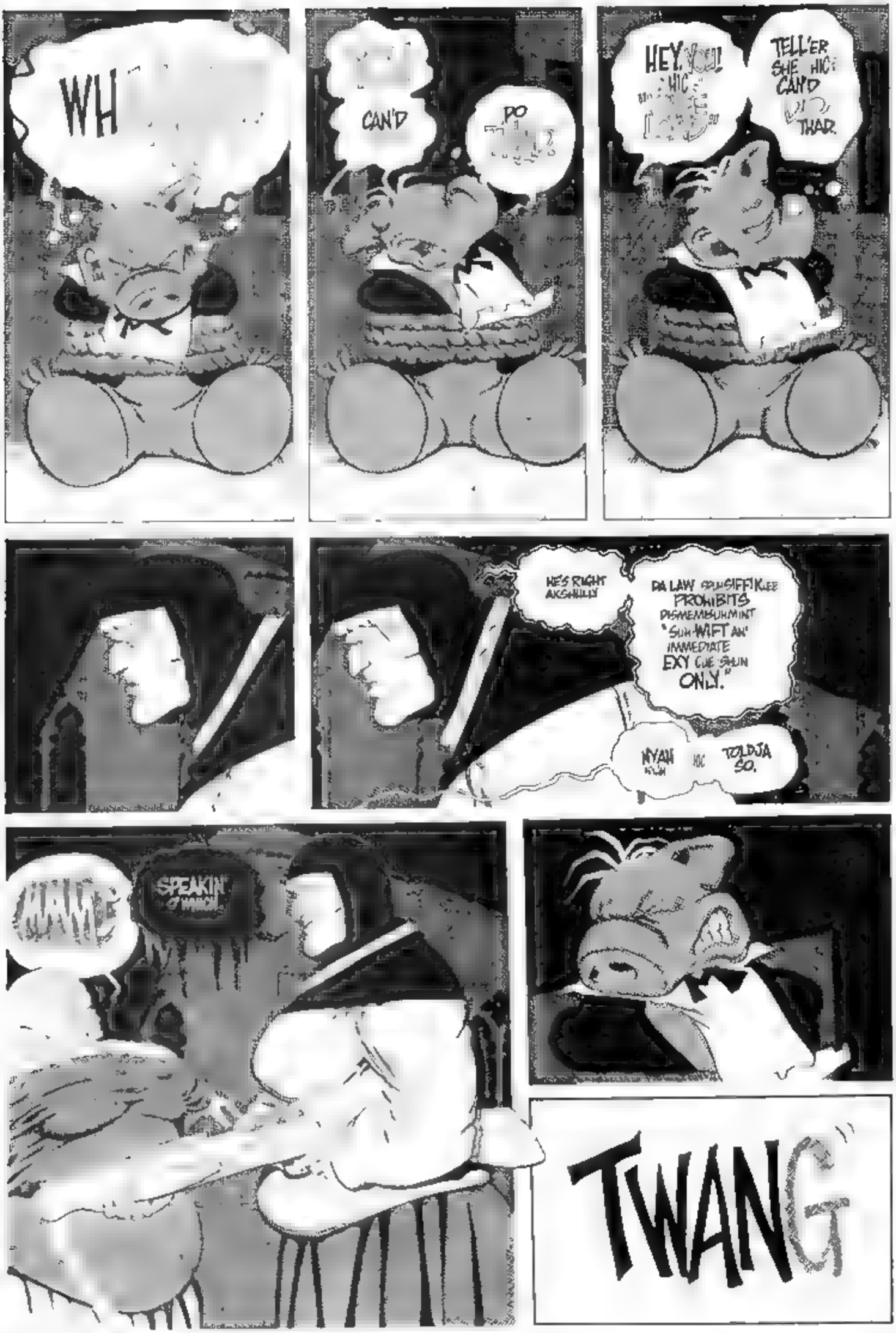

STOMP STOMP STOMP STOMP
SLAM!
WHAT BEEHOOVERTH IS SECONDARYLY?
SECONDARYLY...
IT BEEHOOVERTH US TO ASCERTAIN HOWSOEVER WE MIGHT ABDUCT CEREBUS AND BIND HIM WITHIN THE SANCTVARIE!
CANDY!
COOKIE!
(SARRY) COOKIE! CUM BACK! FRED IZZEN YOOZING YOU...
...FREDDIZ JUS' FILLING IN TIME...
...UNTIL TH' SERVANTS CUM AN' GET 'IM!
AKSHUALLY AND THINKIN WHAT I T'INK MOSHUS T'INKIN...
IS HE?
WE DON'T MOSHUS T'INK EXACTLY WHAT YOU T'INK MOSHUS T'INKIN
NYANG

EEEE

ART THOU THE
OF THIS HOUSE OF ILL-REPUTE
EXCUSETH ME.
THASS
TH'
CHILLDY
SOUNDS
PLEA
OHHHH!
A WISE FELLOW
EH?
ART THOU
OR
GUILTY
GUILDY:


ROPE!
ROPE!
(NYUK NYUK NYUK)
NANANA NEE
NANANA
WHIP! WHIP! WHIP!
MWOOOAH.
PARDON ME, FELLA, BUT YOU AH STAN'EEN' ON MY
NYUNG YUNG YUNG
SO DIS HE'E IS DA LIDDLE TRUBBLE-MAKER, HMM?
ZIP
I DIDN'T DO NUTTIN' I SWAY-UH.
?
SMEK

WWWHAT MMEANS T' IS IS
WWE DDINT DO NUTTIN' WE
SMEK
WHAT KOSHITA AND KOSHITA BOTH MEANETH TO SAY
WE NAILED 'IM DEAD TO RIGHTS!
SO I SEE.
BEE-YOODEE-FULL PLACE Y'GOT HE'E.. ... TO DIE IN.
TWAGTHS
Y'WALCOME.
ACTUALLY... WE...
WE PLANNETH TO TAKETH HUM UP NORTH AND...
DISMEMBERETH HIM A LITTLE BEFORE WE CROAKETH HIM


WH
CAN'D
PO
HEY, YOU! HIC
TELL'ER SHE HIC CAN'D THAR.
HE'S RIGHT AKSHULLY
DA LAW SPUSIFFICLEE PROHIBITS DISMEMBUHMINT "SUH-WIFT AN' IMMEDIATE EXY CUE SHUN ONLY."
NYAH NYAH TOLDJA SO.
SPEAKIN' O' WHICH
TWANG

FLUMP
FLUMP
SAAAAY..
WHUT'S GOIN' ON HEE?
IT'S FROM AN OUTBREAK OF MASTECTAMATOSIS
GESUNDHEIT
SHMEK
OW!
MASTECTAMA WHO?
MASTECTAMATOSIS... A HIGHLY INFECTIOUS PLAGUE WHICH CAUSETH SPONTANEOUS DOUBLE MASTECTOMIES!
WHOA!
SERIOUSLY.
SEER LEE'S ONE
SHMEK ON!
(MAKEST THYSELF USEFUL AND GAGGETH THE PROPHET)

FORTUNATELY, MY PARTNER HERE IS A REDHEAD AND I'M A BRUNETTE.
?
MEANIN' WHUT
EXZACKLY?
MEANIN': MASTECTAMATOSIS AFFECTETH ONLY BLONDES.
BLINK..
SAAAY...
I'M A BLONDE.
"IKENOOBETT THOU HAST NO TIME TO WASTE--THOU MUST IMMUNIZE THYSELF THROUGH THE BATHING OF THY BOSOMS IN RAW GOATS' MILK IN THE NEXT...
COMPY?
MFMPHA
...TEN MINUTES... OR--
=GULP= "OR-"?
"OR" IT'S "BYE-BYE BOOBIES" AIN'T IT?
BOUNCE BOUNCE
CLUNK
KLUNK

THOOM
THOOM
THOOM
JAB
STOP
HELP
MOLESTER!

wanton harlotry with wanton harlots. Human weakness is human weakness, after all. But to allow one's taste for pussy to intercede in the far larger and more important realm of one's relationship with and obligation to one's father is (in my view) to erode one's standards to those of a rutting barnyard beast. The lockout that Cerebus experienced just reminded him of the world of high standards that he came from and the extent to which his own standards had eroded.

If it's any consolation, I didn't really expect many of the boyfriends and husbands in my audience to understand the ending. Such is the pernicious and virtually universal infestation of feminism in the masculine psyche that not only has personal honour gone the way of the dodo, so (it seems to me) has the very concept *of personal honour. I daresay most of my audience's reaction, in Cerebus' situation would have been, Oh well, my parents are dead. At least I still have Jaka to fuck.*

****

Dave,

Letter number two.

You know me, Dave. (Actually, you don't know me. But you've been writing Cerebus for me for long enough now that we'll let that pass).

I've lost count of the number of times I've stood up for you and your work, against those who were ignorant, misinformed, biased or just plain stupid. I know, you never asked me to, and, on the whole, I enjoyed the arguments. Even (especially) after 186, I tried my best to explain your work in my own terms to them. But, after 265, after your five tangents, I'm afraid that's not going to happen anymore.

I'm going to ignore the whining sods instead, because there's no point trying to use logic on them.

Let's see. . . you've certainly stirred the shit, haven't you? Enough of it, too. And that's another thing (tangent m1): what was all that about you and Jeff Smith, and boxing gloves, and naming his day and et-to-the-nth-degree cetera? I mean, ok, it was funny, and anyone who didn't spot the Mailer reference should go to the back of the class, but why were you wasting so many words?

"Jeff, outside now," would have been sufficient.

"Pick a window, Smith, you're leaving," would have gotten across the message. But still, you did stir the shit, and I shouldn't criticise a writer for going on a bit, especially when he gets to be your age.

Where were we? Oh, the infamous tangents. I'm certainly not going to attempt a rebuttal, since there's much I agree with, and I'm certainly not giving you an endorsement ("Comparable to Zola at his best") since there's as much I find plain wrong. I would like to make comments, though, as a man from outside your culture, and make some challenges about the issues you haven't addressed.

On pre-tangent issues, my best to Carol West and Diana Schutz. They've put principals before income, and I hope they'll find positions where they're not required to exercise tolerance of opinions different from their own.

My two main contentions can be summarised briefly as:

1: What weird-ass planet are you living on, because it doesn't look real familiar to me. Your definition of feminism and feminist is a Western, and specifically an American, construct that looks whacky to me from the UK, and must seem incomprehensible in Africa, Asia, and the East. You know, where most of the people on Earth live.

2. As a married man, you say I'm a hollowed-out ventriloquist puppet. Well I say you're a cop-out, sideline sitting no-dick kvetcher (admittedly, a prejudicial phrase), when what we really need are real men, in real marriages bringing up their children to be decent individuals. That's a job, and if it's too big for you then step aside and don't whine at those of us who're doing it.

(I'm aware, incidentally, that if I were Dave Sim, then the two paras above would be as much as anyone would ever quote of this letter, in their furious denunciations of it. I'm not Dave Sim)

To elaborate on the weird-ass planet stuff. First, and fundamentally, this is an argument of the rich squabbling over who allocates deck chairs on the Titanic. I've said before that to anyone living in the Middle East, or in most of Africa, or most of Asia, the picture you paint of feminism is just simply inapplicable. These are people without power, money or education, and to say that they control, in any way, the societies in which they live is just nonsense.

I choose to believe that you are arguing only about Western Societies: if I'm wrong, please tell me so, with particular reference to the Taleban, and the charming Indian custom of burning divorcees.

Even limited to Western society, I don't see the evidence of feminist control as clearly as you. My personal experience of gender politics falls into two phases, my working class upbringing and my current, middle class status (I really had to type that through gritted teeth). In the former, the model of relationships was the traditional one, which wouldn't have changed much in Glasgow since your Dad was at Allan Glen's. Maw, Paw and the weans, Paw doing the earning and Maw watching the weans (and we didn't talk about child rearing, or child care, or any of that stuff: children were to be watched, and no one thought they were angels, least of all their mothers).

Marriages were held together with drink, physical toil, and the promise of two weeks at the seaside. Not all children were belted at home, (I wasn't) but we were all belted at school – routinely, and with no particular vehemence. I thought it was part of life until I got old enough to know better, and refused to be hit by anyone who wouldn't give me the chance to hit back. I still

think it's a crappy way to punish children, and a crappy lesson to teach them about life, so I'll have to disagree with your biological view of the utility of buttocks.

As cosy as this picture of tenament life in the Dear Green Place may seem, my only point in raising it is that it is not the picture you paint: not as recently as thirty years ago, not as near to Canada culturally as Scotland is.

My current, and as I admit much more cushy, position is that I'm married with a 13-year-old son to a professional woman who works, and that between us we pull in, oh, wads of cash. Most of my friends are in the same general state. I don't know how their marriages are. I don't ask because it's none of my business. But mine is built on the principle that two wings on a plane work much better than one. I'm not hollowed out more than usually, and no one has their hand up my arse when I speak. It's possible that I'm too brainwashed to realise how controlled I am, just as it's possible that I mastermind a criminal empire from my secret bunker beneath Manhattan. Possible, but not very likely

Feminism isn't the dirty word for me that it seems to be for you. My idea of feminism (based on the practice of it 15 or so years back) was that we all got a level playing field. Equal access to tools, really. Once everyone had equal access, what they did with that was up to them. I certainly wouldn't have agreed that women should have their exams marked more easily, or be paid extra money for the same work. But this is the same approach I benefited from to enable my access to higher education. I couldn't have studied law without a grant from the government, but the entrance requirements were as strict for me as anyone else (there is an argument that they were stricter, as I had to obtain my results at the roughest school in Glasgow, but I accepted that I was getting access to tools, not necessarily the best tools, but good enough to do the job).

I couldn't see anything wrong with giving women the same opportunities as men then, and I can't see it now. There seems to be an argument in the States that that just isn't good enough, and you've got to be able to guarantee jobs, money, and success to anyone who had a raw deal in terms of class, gender or skin-colour. I think that's a lot more to do with victim-culture than feminism (or socialism, of which more anon).

So the direct evidence of my own experience, the indirect evidence of my friends' lives and the cultural evidence of working and middle class Britain doesn't reflect your own experience, observation and conclusion. Not so much a case of a thing once having been seen being impossible to unsee, as a thing seen once being seen everywhere. None of this repudiates what you have described in the States – but it does convince me that you are living in a crazy-ass world over there.

Secondly, and personally, your take on the family offends me as a man, a husband and a father. Not "offends" as in "I'm going to have a hissy fit and won't ever talk to you again, you nasty man" so much as in "you're quitting the game because you don't like the way it's going". It's just like a man to drag sport into it, but I really, really can't stand it when someone in my team's not trying their best, when they give up and walk off. You're not just quitting on yourself, Sim, you're quitting on all of us, and I'm disappointed (heh – I always knew there was a coach inside me, struggling to get out).

Why am I calling you a quitter, and what's the game? You might well ask. Well, the game is bringing up the next generation. Everyone who's in the game today got here because ethical conveniences were ignored. That done, if you put a life on this planet, or take responsibility for it, then you've got a duty to bring it up right. Every case of child-support you talk about, every case of single motherhood, is due to a father not doing his duty and bringing up his own damn kid (excepting widows and the very odd cases of Jesus and, according to Tom Waites, a young lady during the Civil War). That offends me, that so many men (or would-be men) walk away from their sons and daughters. It's not an easy job but it's worthwhile, and your failure even to suggest that there is a place and a duty for fathers offends me. But enough about that – you haven't put your thoughts down anywhere I can see about fatherhood, and I'm not going to attack your position without knowing what it is.

Other odds and sods from the Tangents. Women are the secondary sex, when it comes to producing sperm. Men fall way short in the ovulation stakes. Attaching any significance to this when ascribing merit to the sexes as a whole is unwarranted. I remember reading in the SCUM (Society of Cutting Up Men) manifesto (these were simpler days, so it wasn't a womminfesto) that

"The male is a biological accident: the Y (male) chromosome is an incomplete X (female) chromosome, that is, has an incomplete set of genes. In other words, the male is an incomplete female, a walking abortion, aborted at the chromosome stage."

Despite the biological truth of that, Valerie Solanas' argument didn't convince me then, and yours doesn't now (although I feel faintly grateful to Valerie for her statement that "To call a man an animal is to flatter him. he's a machine, a walking dildo". If only).

Celibacy as a lifestyle choice? Sure, whatever . . . Seems to be according sex way too much importance, but keep it in your pants, by all means. Presumably legions of female cartoonists will sleep more soundly in their beds, freed from the nightmare of a priapic Sim oppressing them. I've heard the argument before that celibacy concentrates (or stops the dilution of) the examined life. Granted, I've mostly heard this from Catholic priests, who seem more obsessed with sex than

anyone else.

I was interested, but in a distanced way, in your tangent on Martin Luther King. I believe James Elroy's new novel covers the same period, and I'll be interested in his take on the politics and personalities of the time (*American Tabloid* was the coldest take on the Kennedies I've come across to date, and *The Cold Six Thousand* takes us from Dallas to Robert Kennedy's death).

I suspect there's a gulf between us on Socialism that might be interesting to explore, but I'm unwilling to start that until I'm sure that you see a distinction between Communism and Socialism. I've gotten into far too many arguments with Americans (and some Canadians) who see anything left of Clinton as Trotskyite

I had a trawl this morning through the internet discussions on this and the Smith v. Sim controversy. Very depressing stuff, mostly posted by people who've read some one else's paraphrase of something written about you. A lot of the shit seems to be being stirred by someone called Kim Thomson. Who is this person? I seem to remember you referring to a positive early review by him in one of the *Swords* volumes. I take it he's had a change of heart?

Finally, there was an article in one on-line journal ('Suck' I think it's called, though whether that's the descriptive or the imperative I'm not sure) elevating you to the rank of true crank, alongside Ditko, Crumb and some Americans I'd never heard of. Congratulations, that man.

Keep on playing the drums,
Michael

Well, yes. Not to put too fine a point on it, but I do think that you are brainwashed. Actually a more accurate analogy would be a serious drug addiction, somewhere between cocaine and heroin. I know that you think that you're being reasonable, but discussing marriage with a husband is like discussing heroin with a junkie or drinking with an alcoholic. Invariably, to them, they don't have a problem. They are not a junkie, they are not an alcoholic, and anyone who perceives that they have such a problem is always transfigured in the junkie's or alcoholic's mind into the one who has the REAL problem. I mean, I'm speaking here as a either a recovered addict or an addict whose addiction is in remission. In my experience, marriage and fatherhood are the only two addictions which, in our society, are universally accepted as being intrinsically noble (a notable exception being Islam: the Koran makes the point a number of times that a man's wealth and his children are a test—Sura 8:28 as an example—and that a man's first and greatest loyalty must always be to God). I mean, your own sense of lofty nobility at having produced an imperfect replica of yourself just permeates every sentence of your letter, Michael. In a world of (what?) eight billion people, did we really, really need an imperfect replica of you? Couldn't we all just have somehow muddled our way into the 21st century without little Fill-in-the-blank Mooney Jr. arriving in this world in the late 1980s? Or, better yet, couldn't the self-admitted "wads of cash" that you and Mrs. Mooney pull in have been better spent in providing for those babies and children who were already here and struggling to survive in disadvantaged circumstances? Particularly in Africa or on the subcontinent where what you and your better half spend on a week's vacation could probably have kept a hundred African children alive for a decade? Ah. That doesn't count, does it? No, no. You have to produce your own little bundle of externalized self-importance. Isn't that just a teensy bit, well, selfish? I mean, I'm selfish about any number of things, but I at least TRY to maintain a good grasp of reality in those areas. that selfishness is selfishness, vanity is vanity, self-importance is self-importance. I mean, fine. You want to have a kid, have a kid. But don't make it sound as if you've single-handedly invented a cure for cancer. The way you fellows get all choked up about yourselves. Have the courtesy to be just a little ashamed at so unnecessary an expression of human vanity or at least stop portraying yourselves as better than everyone else. You know, "Speaking as a father of a thirteen-year-old—" as if this were synonymous with "Speaking as a Nobel laureate in the field of Physics

Whether you admit it to yourself or not (and clearly you are either unable or unwilling to admit it to yourself), by virtue of your circumstance, it is necessary for you to toe the feminist party line. (what's the matter, just couldn't move out of mummy's house without having a substitute mummy to hug you and tell you what a big, brave boy you are? Afraid of sleeping all alone in the dark? Afraid that if you don't have non-stop chit-chat and family noises around that you might have to examine who you actually are—the degree to which you have become that which physically and spiritually nauseated you back when you had ideals, ethics and scruples? "Harumph," you say. "Yes. Well. Ideals, ethics and scruples are all well and good, but I Have ' A Wife. And . Child. To. Support." Interesting how you fellows are always using fatherhood as a credential which raises you above us lesser beings and "the wife and child" as cover for your own free will capitulation to oink oink materialism).

My larger point, which you (rather artfully) evade is that structurally *marriage is being changed to suit the feminist agenda and that men are being forced to capitulate and believe Many Impossible Things Before Breakfast and are threatened with the loss of their children and half of their possessions and half of their income–indefinitely–if they don't capitulate. Whether* your *wife* does *this, or my* ex-*wife* did *this (she most definitely* didn't*) is irrelevant, anecdotal.* Structurally *mar-*

riage is a Sword of Damocles hanging over every husband and would-be husband and common law husband's head. Unless that Sword of Damocles is legally removed by the feminists who a) put it there and b) keep making it larger and sharper, I think it well worth pointing out a) its existence b) the fact that it is getting larger and sharper and c) knowingly taking up residence beneath it is (as they used to say) a "mug's game"

I should probably have mentioned in "Tangent" that I was not (in any way) addressing my own Lost Generation of squishy John Lennon wannabe's. Nor the generation after mine. Nor the generation after that. A Lost Cause is A Lost Cause and those generations of males must be recognized as such. No, "Tangent" was addressed to those fellows in their teens and twenties (now? a decade from now? a century from now? Who is to say, besides God?) who have not already mortgaged their futures and their souls for the sake of grubby and unethical feminist subservience, who have not deluded themselves that the endorphin "high" they get from their hormonal admiration for female breasts, vaginas, legs, faces and buttocks is anything but hormonal admiration. And that what the seriously and dramatically endorphin-addled call "love" is, in actual fact, a scam to bind (truly study the verb, gentlemen) by force of law masculine ethical, economic and spiritual fortunes to the owner-proprietor of a specific pair of female breasts, a specific vagina, a specific pair of legs, a specific face and a specific set of buttocks. Said scam having fallen on somewhat hard times (all exceptional one-hundred-million-dollar "lovely parting gift" Jane Fonda-style "jackpots" duly noted), it is, in my view, worth cautioning the feminist prey, the feminist quarry that the rules of the hunt are being changed constantly even as the effectiveness of the scam erodes. Without amending legislation, without so much as one minute's debate, the feminist-infected judiciaries of the G-7 countries have unilaterally made common-law marriage co-equivalent with legal marriage. You live with her for a year or even off-and-on for a few months and, at the discretion—or, rather, "discretion"—of the feminist courts she is entitled to half of your possessions and half of your income. Most of the G-7 countries have also decided (or are flirting with the notion) that there is no such thing as a final divorce. Any divorce case can be reopened after the ex-wife has run through her settlement and decides that she is entitled to more. Which, of course, makes any and all pre-nuptial agreements just so much self-deluding waste paper, another permutation of the smoke-and-mirrors "pay no attention to the feminist parasite behind the curtain" scam. I think it worth cautioning young fellows that this is the game that is afoot and that they shouldn't listen to endorphin-addled dupes and fellow travellers like yourself when it comes to the pros and cons of marriage—actual or common-law—but should genuinely examine the feminist nutcracker of modern matrimonial jurisprudence. Just because you are left with the mere dregs of an ethical, spiritual masculine nature (now eroded into grubby feminist subservience) is no reason that some future generation will not arise which is not so easily swindled, so dramatically self-deluded, and so sickeningly self-congratulatory about the extent of their own compromises. I haven't made many compromises in my life, Michael, and very few irretrievable ones. I'm not bragging. I'm just saying that at the age of forty-five I look back on a life of "near misses" where I might have ended up like you (and every other man that I know of my generation) and I have, instead, remained as true as I can to those ideals and scruples that I held as a very idealistic teenager. I hope you don't mind if I try to help others to avoid your degraded circumstance by telling them that it is possible to avoid. I mean, I don't wish to gild the lily unnecessarily. If you adhere to masculine principles, ethic and scruples in a feminist world you will, likely as not, end up having few if any friends, scrupulously silent and anonymous supporters, universally despised and maligned, called a Nazi, your private life both fictional and non-fictional will be paraded around the gossip circuit, etc. etc. But, I can say without fear of contradiction that I would much rather maintain my ethics and my scruples and my principles intact as my life force begins the slow abatement that accompanies middle age than to have (say) a brand new dining room set or (say) a bigger house or (say) three weeks in a villa on the Mediterranean and no ethics, no scruples and no principles and some bimbo nattering the same stupid anecdotes at me that she was nattering at me two decades before and having to increasingly rely on alcohol to dull my inescapable sense of loss and futility

Feel better, now? Good! I do, too. Thanks for writing, Michael.

****

Seth,
Guelph, Ontario

Dave;

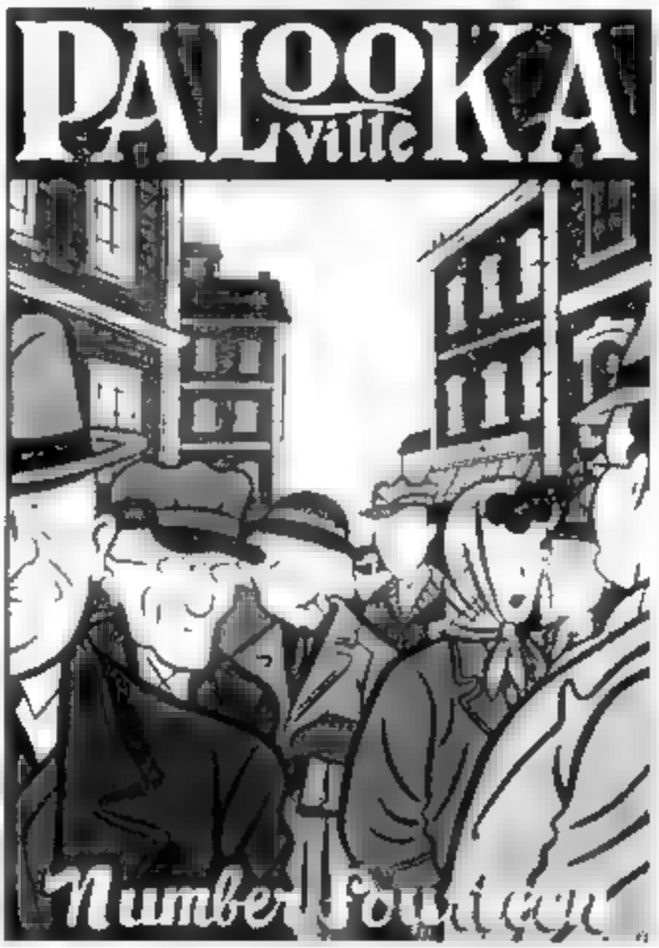
I read your essay in the latest issue of *Cerebus* a couple of days ago and it has been bothering me quite a bit.

It's not so much your opinions, since I have been well aware that you possessed these foolish notions—no, it's more the terrible "lameness" of your arguments. While reading your essay I was consistantly reminded of the kind of sad anecdotal evidence used by high-falutin' bigots when trying to "prove" that blacks were less intelligent than whites (or other such things).

Men and women are undoubtedly different—but you've made no real inquiry into what those differences might be. You've merely trotted out old cliches (water-

melons, fried chicken and laziness—to use a comparison). It is transparently clear that your ideas about gender are simply manifestations of your feelings (yes, feelings) toward woman. . . then later, evidence was sought to back up these feelings. You can say otherwise, but it is unlikely that I will be convinced that it happened the other way around.

You consistantly used the "straw-man" device (or should I say "straw-woman") to make everything about woman seem inherently irrational. You never seriously put forward any example of womanhood that challenged your pet theories. Any grand "revelation" about the secret of human existance must be viewed suspiciously—especially ones that blame all human misery on one group. Really, in a clear light, your essay reveals a level of reasoning that is so shoddy, I gave you more credit than this. Your ideas offend me—but still, I thought you would put up a better argument to support them.



Dave, you obviously put a lot of time and effort into this essay, yet in the end it came off just as silly and closed-minded as the sort of arguments you hear from the religious right in America (or worse—radio talk-show hosts). I am disappointed.

I considered going through your essay and refuting it point by point—but I don't have the time for this (I'm on the last couple of pages of PV #15) ...and frankly, it would be a waste of my time. Some of the issues are complex and some simple.. but your take on most of them, places them beyond the pale of rational argument. You have stacked the deck in your favour. For example—if I were to point out that males hardly represent some triumph of reason—that in fact, most males seem devoted to it's brainless opposite, I'm sure you'd simply reject this point by placing these men in the "feminized" camp (or something along these lines) and dodge the whole issue. Basically, you can effectively remove any counter-idea by moving it outside the area of debate. This is a poor method of argument—and pointless for the person in my position.

Honestly, I was truly disappointed to see you promoting the idea of physical coersion. I doubt you would approve of someone spanking you when they got "tired" of your arguments. I imagine that would be a pretty humiliating experience. Why you would consider that appropriate for someone else I cannot imagine. In a different vein, I doubt Martin Luther King Jr. would appreciate being dragged into your argument for the oppression of any group. Whatever your opinion of his ethics, I think it is a bit presumptuous to structure this part of the essay with yourself (seemingly) in the higher moral position than Dr. King. I realize that since you are such a perfectly religious and moral example you can effectively judge everyone else (sarcasm, of course).

On a side note—The way you consider men co-opted by feminists is probably not all that different from how I would view your religious conversion. The feminists have nothing on these religious groups that have spent centuries practicing mind control. Don't you find it a touch self-serving that you can handle sorting out the ideas of religion and meld it to your own purpose—yet the rest of us poor men can't handle the ideas of feminism without being self-deluded? Come on!

Finally, (I must get back to work) your article does not seem, in the least, like a cold piece of reasoning. It seems to be an emotional tirade. I'm sure this will insult you—but it reminded me of the outburst of a frustrated child Frustrated that the world does not conform to his ideas.

I feel this frustration myself—the world does not conform to my ideas—but I'm not so stupid to believe that this is the fault of some group of scapegoats.

Go ahead Dave, completely discount everything I've said here. I did it to you. What's the point of this letter then? I wanted you to hear what I had to say while I was still irritated, so that the next time we met you didn't think I was avoiding the issue. I have avoided it in the past for the simple reason that I knew it was pointless (no-one will be changing their opinion) and I didn't wish to insult you. However, I stand in complete opposition to your position and I wanted you to know that.

Please forgive the messy letter,
Seth

No problem, Seth. We vehemently disagree about just about everything, but it's always a pleasure to hear from you

Since I am the only person willing to admit to not being a feminist and, given that feminism has had thirty years of unopposed freedom to endlessly reiterate—and institute as law in many cases—its manifold absurdities, I scarcely think it either advisable—or necessary—for me to "put forward any example of womanhood that challenged (my) pet theories" (actually I did when I discussed chauvinism and the fact that women are the chauvinists, not men, that there are isolated examples of women generating surplus wealth but they are a small, small minority when considered relative to the number of men generating surplus wealth. But, leaving that aside...) I daresay that your even suggesting such "equal time considerations" is part-and-parcel of your own feminist nature which requires absolute capitulation to its view, the imposition of feminist-totalitarian absolutism extending even to the only voice of opposition· my own. Insufficient (as everything is insufficient) to feminists that the vast majority of males have been cowed into submission and that mine is the only voice of opposition· no, now you insist that I must argue your side of the discussion as well as my own—even as you make it plain that you yourself find not one word, not one phrase, not one scrap of validity in anything that I wrote. I, at least, devoted the better part of a year to refining my argument into twenty pages of a carefully considered five-sided "position paper". And in reply, I am told that—not only are my arguments just wrong—but they can be dismissed "on the fly" in a hastily typed two page letter. Yes, you are "disappointed," yes, you are "offended". But what I was saying in "Tangent" and what I am saying now is that that is insufficient in the environment of intellectual debate since it is pure emotionalism. You can't refute a more accurate point by saying that that more accurate point "disappoints" you or "offends" you. You can only refute a more accurate point by making an even MORE accurate point and I am saying that you—you, individually, and you, as feminists, collectively—are unable to do so because my view is a more accurate perception of reality than your own. However you phrase your "arguments" they will always—always—amount to nothing more than "it hurts my feelings when you say that" or "I haven't got time to discuss this, but in my heart of hearts I really feel that you are wrong" or "how would you like it if someone made you feel bad the way you're making me feel bad?" or "I really feel sorry for you that you're not a nice person like I am".

"I wanted you to hear what I had to say while I was still irritated"

Seth

And I do think that you've crossed a boundary with your reference to "watermelons, fried chicken and laziness". Since the largest point that I was making in "Tangent" was that feminists usurped the Civil Rights movement from black men your attempt to revive (by invoking racist stereotypes) the transparently misapprehended notion that there is anything analogous between the blight of feminism and black men pursuing their Civil Rights under the terms of the United States Constitution seems more than a little tacky (an understatement, but in the interests of maintaining your own level of civility I'll not use a stronger term).

As to the Reverend Martin Luther King, I think you're, again, just compounding the initial feminist transgression (in usurping the Civil Rights movement from him shortly before his death) in attempting to recast him in your team's political image. Martin Luther King was not a feminist and believed very strongly that Coretta King's place was in the home, in charge of the day-to-day custodial care of their children. Revisionism is the hobgoblin of the feminist movement, as it was with communism before it. I respectfully submit that you learn who is and who was on your "team" and content yourself with them. Put another way, while your "team," indisputably, can have John Lennon (and you are, I assure you, more than welcome to him) your "team" can't have John F. Kennedy.

Not without recourse to totalitarian revisionism, anyway.

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Larry Hart,
1834 Cedar Court,
Des Plaines, Illinois,
60018

Dave,

I literally don't know where to begin, "cart and horse" wise (or "chicken and egg" wise) that is. I guess I'll just start this journey of 1000 miles with a single step, and see where it leads.

Dry Logic

Elementary logic dictates that if A is true, and A implies B, then B *must* be true. If one wishes to argue that B is false, it is necessary to show *either* that A is false or that A does *not* in fact imply B. You can't accept the two premises without accepting the conclusion as inevitable.

On the other hand, if you know that B is true and that A implies B, you still know nothing about A. A common fallacy is to say that these two premises lead to the truth of A, but that is simply a fallacy. If I know that I am a mammal, and that all cats are mammals, that does not prove that I am a cat (nor does it prove that I am not a cat).

Although the fallacy above does not in fact prove anything, it sometimes can *suggest* a road to truth. Sometimes you don't know that A is true, but if A implies B, and A implies C, and A implies {D through J}, and B, C, D,. . . J are all true, then even though we still haven't *proven* a darn thing about A, it sure *seems* as if A is onto something. Storytellers take leaps like this all the time. I'll call it "storytellers' fallacy" although I know storytellers understand full well they are not *proving* anything in this manner. What they are doing is exploring new possibilities. You've got all these inexplicable truths (B through J), and gee, isn't it strange that if you accept one premise (A) it seems to explain all of them. This is what I believe you mean by the phrase "like any good story, it explains a lot". It makes one think. It makes one look for previously unrecognized connections. It leads the mind into new patterns of thought. It may ultimately provoke someone to go and actually prove that A is true. A good storyteller can lead people in directions where pure logic is hitting a dead end.

But the line of reasoning above, no matter how compelling a theory it produces, does not in fact prove A is true. To imply that it does is either disingenuousness or self-delusion on the part of the storyteller. And if one goes on to "prove" other conclusions using A as a premise (Hey, we know that A also implies Z, and since we've "proven" now that A is true, then Z *must* be true) really takes one down a dangerous path. Because as interesting as it may be to explore the new-found insight (what if A is true?) to all its logical conclusions, it's all still simply an interesting theory, not a proof, resting on the *hypothesis* (not fact) that A is true. If one forgets that A is just a hypothesis (no matter how interesting or elegant), if one begins to believe that he has proven A and has therefore proven anything that logically follows from A, then one is engaging in a logically dangerous game of sleight of hand. I'll call this "aggravated storytellers' fallacy."

To be expanded. . .

Dave, I admire you as a brilliant storyteller, and you make me think about things in ways that no one else (well maybe Kurt Vonnegut too) has. I certainly agree that our society is stuck in a rut in discussions of gender issues, and that you ask hard questions that no one else does. But I also believe that your arguments about gender from *Reads* through "Tangent" contain many examples of aggravated storytellers' fallacy. You get people to accept a premise A in order to see where it leads (let's see where he's going with this), and then you're concluding all sorts of things from that premise and saying "so X, Y and Z *must* be true", when in fact the premise A is only a hypothesis and the conclusions X, Y, and Z are only interesting theories. Expanding on this could take weeks if not longer, so I'll just list some examples of "interesting hypotheses, which 'explain' a lot, but which nonetheless are not proven facts" as a kind of down payment with the intention of sending a more detailed analysis later.

Interesting but nonetheless unproven hypotheses:

1) Death is male; birth is female
2) No one wants to be a woman (as opposed to "No *man* wants to be a woman.")
3) Feminists would never give up alimony (remember the late 70's-early 80's feminism?)
4) Marriage is strictly a female institution
5) Belief in God necessarily involves belief in an established monotheistic religion
6) The big one (big *lie*?): Monotheism is masculine; Paganism is feminine

They make great stories in that they "explain a lot", but they are not facts, and to conclude anything from them at the length you do in "Tangent" as if they were facts, well this husband *thinks* (not *feels* this time) that you're on shaky ground at best and dangerously disingenuous at worst. I know that I need to go into much more detail to make my point, and I fully intend to do so in the near future.

tangent of my own

In the meantime, you might want to consider more clearly which side of the Elian Gonzales fiasco was represented by communists. From where I sit, the Republicans and anti-communists were trying to push for political asylum for a six-year-old. Bill Clinton, sided with the communists in Cuba who wanted him returned to his *father*. I will agree with you to the extent that the feminists and psychologists led us down a path where political asylum for Elian had become a possibility. However this issue made the strangest of bedfellows

wherein both political sides had to adopt positions previously anathema to them—Republicans had to argue *against* a father's parental rights, and feminists had to argue in their favor. Both sides did so with no sense of irony or of having learned that their stances, except in this particular case, may be wrong, even when presented with the implications of this particular case.

To be continued.

Sincerely yours,
Larry Hart

I apologize, Larry, for allowing our correspondence to lapse. Alas, my correspondence with everyone has lapsed as the number of hours required to accomplish the same amount of work in my forties that I used to do in a dramatically shorter length of time in my twenties and thirties has escalated exponentially.

Hypotheses.

1) That was a convenience of the moment since I knew that Jeff Smith, at the time, was heavily 'into' Joseph Campbell and Robert Graves and those sorts of fellows (and still is, judging by the paganism which seems—increasingly—to dominate, where it does not overwhelm, the Bone *storyline). By personifying death and birth—any pagan worthy of the name would instantly recognize the masculine Thanatos and the feminine Eros (to use their Greek incarnations) respectively—I thought I could clearly and simply illustrate that the female half of reality is prevailing in our world and has been prevailing for some time. As a secular-humanist-agnostic (which is what I was at the time) this seemed to me a very straightforward proposition and a time-saving device in discussing the battle of the sexes with a pagan (which is what I gathered Jeff was and is). To this day I am unable to comprehend how he could say that he did not "accept" that Eros has it "all over" on poor Thanatos in our world.*

2) If women wanted to be women they wouldn't be expending all of this energy and verbiage in the effort to eradicate distinctions between themselves and men. As a man it is critically important to me that the very clear and very sharp distinctions between the genders be recognized and maintained (at the very least so that if one has to call for the assistance of a fireman one can be certain that the individual who shows up is physically capable of handling the job. Likewise a policeman. Likewise a soldier. If a woman is capable of achieving the same physical standards as a fireman and a policeman, by all means. But don't try and delude me—or yourself—into believing that eroding masculine standards to accommodate the whims of females who chose the wrong parent to identify with as they were growing up makes any kind of sense). As those distinctions are officially—and nearly universally—being eroded and replaced with Impossible Things to Believe Before Breakfast, my own views seem (to me, anyway) to be confirmed rather than refuted. If a self-published comic book is the last bastion of masculinity, so be it. If I am to be arrested (under Canadian laws of recent feminist vintage) for promulgating hate literature against feminists, so be it. But short of the draconian measures George Orwell documented in 1984 *you are not going to be able to compel me to declare that women want to be women. I'm not sure they want to be men (at least parts of the latest generation of females seems to be, at long last, finding that out) but they certainly don't want to be women. Who would?*

*3) If you mean those far-famed Million Women Marches demanding that alimony be struck from the laws of every civilized nation, no, Larry, I don't remember that. Maybe you could send me some clippings when you get a minute. Even taking your thesis as factual (which I don't) I can only ask, what changed? If feminists genuinely deplored alimony in the 70's and early 80's shouldn't they genuinely deplore it today? And shouldn't they deplore it even more after three decades of feminism? I mean if all of these—*Amazons*—were being suppressed and oppressed and downtrodden and subjugated up until 1970 and they're really all that they purport themselves to be, shouldn't alimony be considered an insult? A profound insult to these—*Superwomen*—who walk amongst us? What self-respecting—Übberfraulein—would take some worthless man's money when she is (by her own report) capable of leaping tall buildings at a single bound, running faster than a locomotive, etc. etc. and she now has had a thirty-year head start to, as one, show that the Sisterhood Stands Alone. Wouldn't that be a first feminist priority in a capitalist society? Accept no money from men. No money from boyfriends, from husbands, from ex-husbands, from fathers, no money from tax revenues collected from men. No, I don't mean contenting themselves with the tokenism of penny-ante Feminist Collective Banks. I mean Island Nation Womanhood. How much money do you think Island Nation Womanhood could collect in taxes and how far do you think those tax revenues would go in paying for all of their touchy-feely social programs and (in Canada, anyway) medical coverage for a gender which sprints to the doctor and/or pharmacy if they feel so much as a twinge or a twitch? I, for one, would welcome a division in Canada between Island Nation Womanhood and Island Nation Manhood. We men will have our own parliament, with our own elected members, we'll pay our taxes for what we think is worthwhile and the women can do the same.*

4) Marriage is a female invention *is what I said "no more sacred as an institution than are feminism and communism." I participated in it for the same reason, I believe, that most men do: I made a stupid choice under the influence of endorphins which muddied my thinking and then stuck it out for too long because it seemed like the honourable thing to do. But that in no way makes marriage a female institution. That makes it a female-and-drug-addled-man (cum-stupid-misguid-*

edly-chivalrous-man) institution. It wouldn't exist without both of those participants

5) I'm not sure where you got that one, Lar, but you sure didn't get it from me. The biggest complaint that I have with Judaism, Christianity and Islam is that the entrenched orthodox custodians of those faiths implicitly demand that you let go of the other two if you want to actively embrace one of them. Islam seems to offend the least in this regard but I would still think myself deceitful in making the Hajj (the pilgrimage to Mecca) as a firm believer in both Judaism and Christianity as vital, living, breathing and entirely valid faiths in which God revealed himself to men. That is, I believe that references in the Koran to the genuinely devout "People of the Book" (Jews and Christians) being few in number and the rest being lying hypocrites were intended to apply only to the Jews and Christians of Muhammad's time (the 7th century) and place (Mecca and Medina)—a completely accurate assessment judging by their various joint betrayals of Muhammad, and their joint efforts to undermine and waylay the Prophet and his fledgling movement (prophetic tradition maintains that Muhammad was murdered by a Jewess). I'm reasonably sure that my entirely ecumenical view—as enunciated—isn't (to say the least) widely shared by either the entrenched orthodox custodians of Islam (the Imams) or the Saudi royal family (in whose sovereign territory the Kaaba resides). Maybe one day that won't be the case. I certainly hope that the prodigious efforts being exerted by Pope John Paul II in endeavouring to build bridges to the Greek Orthodox Church, to the various Protestant denominations—and to Islam—bear still greater ecumenical fruit as we proceed through the 21st century. But, for the moment, holding Judaism, Christianity and Islam in equal esteem is going to win me about as many friends as is my considered view that feminism is totally lacking in any sound intellectual foundation.

Monotheism?

Yes, I am a monotheist without apology or demure. Does that mean that I think all Hindus (as an example) are going to Hell? It would seem to me very, very unlikely that whole segments of humankind are, implicitly, just kindling for the Eternal Fire, but—as I said in "Tangent"—I am completely ignorant in these matters as is everyone else (so far as I know) alive in the world today. I do think it always worth remembering that who is and who is not condemned is God's business solely and completely and that even considering one's own views (this is the Muslim part of me talking) on the subject represents a real and dangerous form of blasphemy. Or, as the Synoptic Jesus put it, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." Prophetic tradition holds that Jews and Christians undermined their faiths by being inappropriately curious about things that were none of their business. I agree. Each individual has more than enough on his or her own plate with prayer and work and feeding the poor and fasting in the sacred month of Ramadan without wasting his or her time on matters that are very much above his or her place (whoever he or she is).

As with everything else, we'll all find out on the Last Day what happens to all of us, the Hindus and everyone else included.

6) It may seem like I'm almost at issue 300, but I'm still only on issue 269. Patience, Larry, patience.

Your Tangent and Welcome to It (with apologies to James Thurber)

No, I wasn't talking about the possibility of Elian Gonzales getting *political asylum, I was talking about Elian Gonzales* being allowed to apply for *political asylum. "I, Elian Gonzales, being of sound six-year-old-mind-do-hereby, etc. etc." and the strange phrasing of the U.S. Immigration Laws (of undoubtedly recent feminist vintage) which "did not automatically disqualify" a petition for political asylum purely on the basis of age. That is, a Federal or Circuit Court Judge, as a duly appointed Officer of the Judiciary, can't just say "Get out of my courtroom, you* idiots" *if a family and their lawyer show up with a three-year-old and tell you the three-year-old wants to apply for political asylum.*

And where did you get the misbegotten notion that feminists were arguing in favour of a father's *parental rights? The anti-communist Republicans, okay, I can see what you're saying, I think you have a valid point about them getting tangled up in their own peculiar ideologies—ideologies with which I vehemently disagree. In my own view (which was society's view prior to the feminist plague) until he (or she) reaches the age of his (or her) majority, a child is whatever his (or her) father tells him (or her) he (or she) is. Communist, Cuban, Floridian, Canadian, Methodist, Jewish, agnostic. As my Dad used to say, "when I say 'jump', jump' ask how high?' on the way up."*

But feminists? C'mon, Larry! The whole point *of feminism is to undermine and destroy fatherhood (except insofar as it capitulates to feminist wilfulness). Feminists were scarcely marching in the streets to demand that Elian be given back to his father. Just the opposite. In their feminist view, because Elian's mother died trying to get him to the United States, the United States was where he belonged. To the feminists it didn't matter what his father thought before his ex-wife absconded with Elian and, to the feminists, it didn't matter what his father thought after she died. To a feminist, a child is just an enlarged, externalized female organ and you can no more tell a mother where her child is going to live than you can tell her where she can keep her pancreas (laugh if you want, Larry. That's your "team's" political viewpoint).*

Michael, Seth, Larry. I love you guys (ahem—in a very masculine way), but please. Enough is enough with the Sir Galahad bullshit. If any FEMALE (actually born with a vagina, not some guy with a breast fetish pumped full of estrogen) feminists in my audience want to write in and explain to me how feminism didn't usurp

the Civil Rights movement from Martin Luther King, Jr and explain to me and to my readers why the seventeen Impossible Things to Believe Before Breakfast are not only Not Impossible but are ALL (note emphasis: ALL) in fact The Only Hope for Our Civilization Now and In the Centuries to Come, I will be happy to print their letters and reply to them.

After all, if feminists aren't capable of defending themselves and they always need some Sir Galahad to step up and take their side, doesn't that completely undermine the hallucination they're trying to persuade those of us who are not hollowed-out ventriliquist puppet husbands to believe is true? And aren't you insulting them by pretentiously ('isn't that just like a man?') thinking that you have a place in defending feminism?

I mean, I do agree with you in at least one area, Seth. It is certainly far, far more important for you to get on with the business of finishing your wonderful graphic novel, Clyde Fans *(currently being serialized in Seth's* Palookaville *(four-issue subscriptions available from Drawn & Quarterly, $9.95 U.S. and $13.95 in Canadian funds PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2V 4S8 www.drawnandquarterly.com. Highly recommended as is* It's a Good Life, if You Don't Weaken, *Seth's previous graphic novel) than it is for you to waste your time cobbling together some half-baked defence of a broken-down college girls' fad from the 1970's.*

****

Ralph Kidson,
3 Langridges Close,
Newick, East Sussex,
BN8 4LZ
United Kingdom

Dear Dave,

Why don't you go back to doing the Beavers (so to speak)? "Captain Canaduck awaaay!" Thanks for printing that "True Story of Colonial Folk" in your comic that you do. I was sure surprised. There's a really good series on the telly (AARGH) over here now about this whole Ruby Ridge-Waco-N.W.O.-Death to Z.O.G.-Aryan Nation craziness in the States. I'm surprised all those goddamn Jew bastids who own the media ALLOWED IT TO BE SHOWED! Anyway, here's a recent thing I co-did. Bit shit, but also here's a fun little book about them goddamn ragheads and stuff

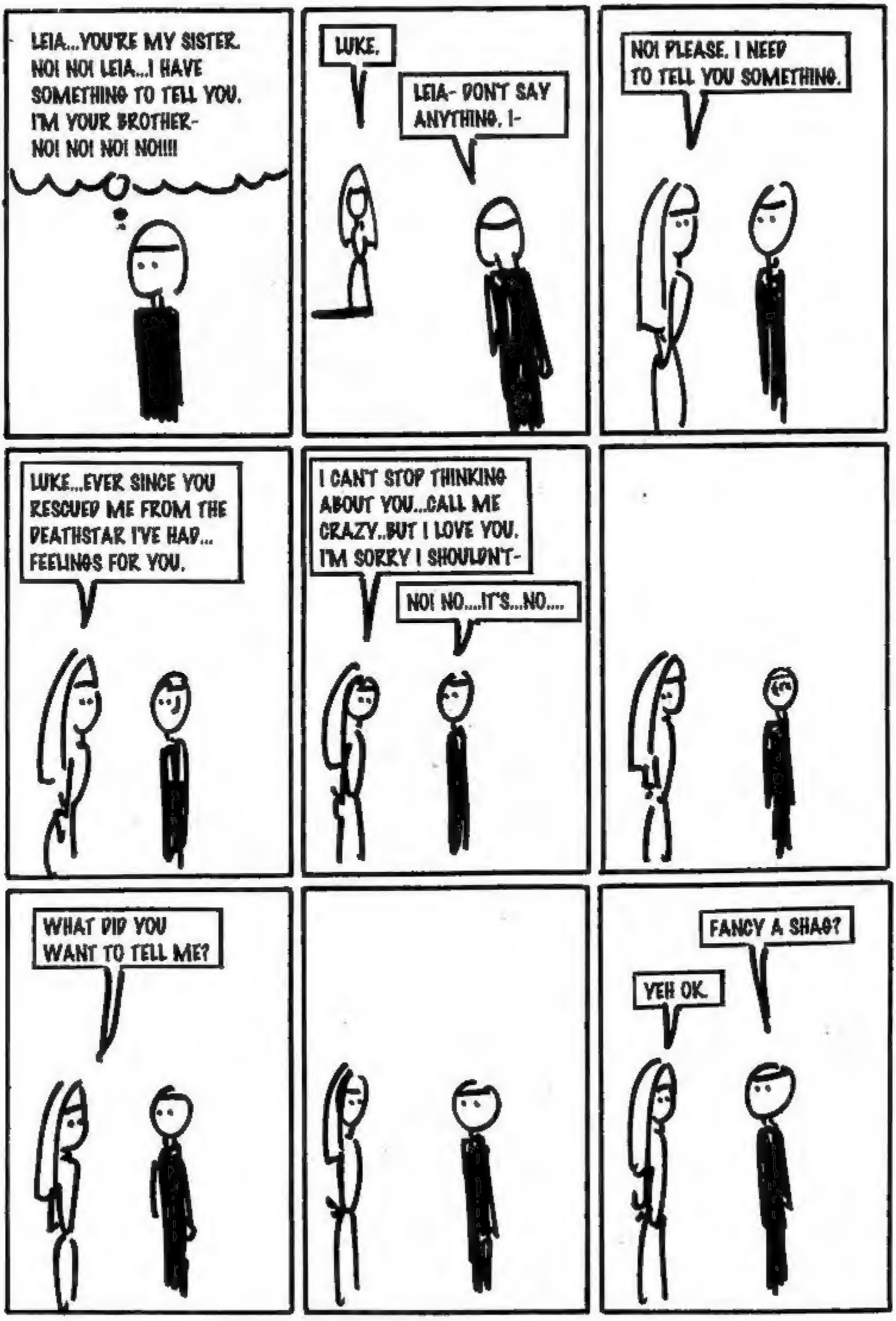
Cheers & Love,
Ralph

"Go back to doing the Beavers (so to speak)?" I thought I'd piss myself laughing. Finally, Ralph shows up again, actively demonstrating why he isn't (to say the least) a leading candidate for Foreign Secretary in Tony Blair's Cabinet. His political Cabinet, I mean. Ralph might do an admirable job as one of those little butler stand-up in the Prime Minister's liquor cabinet. The "bit shit recent thing" he "co-did" is Two to Beam Up *("Reasonably priced at two of your earth pounds") which is mostly a* Star Wars/2000 A.D. *parody. But lost on me, I'm afraid, since I never read* 2000 A.D. *and I've only seen the first two* Star Wars *films (I'm pretty generally assured that I'm better leaving it that way). Anyway, here's one of the strips (see facing page) by Tim Brown, Ralph's collaborator on this project—who also did the "Amazing Adventures of Dave Sim" strip (on the inside back cover).*

The "goddamn ragheads and stuff" was, at first glance, a mini-comic version of Edward Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*—which I thought was an hysterical idea. Turns out, on closer examination, to be a legitimate project—number 79 in a series of 80 mini-comic-sized booklets featuring excerpts from Gibbon's mammoth (and I would suppose, still definitive) 18th century work. This one was "The Fall of Constantinople in 1453," a decisive victory for Islam over Christianity. I enjoyed it quite a bit (one advantage of giving equal weight to Judaism, Christianity and Islam is that I get to cheer for everybody in these epic confrontations). These are available from Mr Carr, 27 Milldale Rd., Kettering, Northants, United Kingdom. No price marked.*

On a more serious note, the mention of Waco (et al) reminds me that I should mention how incredibly impressed I was by Gore Vidal coming forward and saying publicly that—while he deplores Timothy McVeigh's bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City (as, I am sure, we all do)—he stands with McVeigh in opposing the totalitarian abuse of federal power and the (let's face it) government-sanctioned murder of American citizens (particularly women and children) by the FBI and the ATF as ordered by Janet Reno (had the Attorney General been a man, I'm sure he would have been indicted for his responsibility in ordering such a massacre). Considering that I had pretty much written off Gore Vidal and anticipated that he would live out the rest of his life in decadent or semi-decadent pagan self-exile in Rome and environs, to see him come roaring back in his more admirable and (one hopes) natural role as a True Patriot of the Great and Ongoing American Experiment is inspirational in the extreme. That having been said, I fundamentally disagree with his assessment that Timothy McVeigh is "not crazy." The murder of women and children (under any standard of personal masculine honour, however degraded by feminist totalitarianism) has to be considered as insane. How does one, honourably and in a masculine fashion, respond when the Attorney-General of the United States commits just such an act with total impunity? Interesting question.

Anyway, send Ralph a few dollars or pounds or whatever and he'll send you the issue of Stick &


LEIA...YOU'RE MY SISTER.
NO! NO! LEIA...I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU. I'M YOUR BROTHER-
NO! NO! NO! NO!!!!
LUKE.
LEIA- DON'T SAY ANYTHING. I-
NO! PLEASE. I NEED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.
LUKE...EVER SINCE YOU RESCUED ME FROM THE DEATHSTAR I'VE HAD... FEELINGS FOR YOU.
I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT YOU...CALL ME CRAZY..BUT I LOVE YOU. I'M SORRY I SHOULDN'T-
NO! NO....IT'S...NO....
WHAT DID YOU WANT TO TELL ME?
FANCY A SHAG?
YEH OK.

Envelope *I did my "The Great Gatsby" cover for:* Two to Beam Up *or something just as good*

****

Mark Price,
10406 SE 174th St. #21
Renton, Washington,
98055

Dave,

Oddly enough, my first reaction upon reading 'Tangent' was, "Oh, my God! DAVE QUIT SMOKING?"

Cheers,
Mark Price

Oh, I KNOW! Talk about an Impossible Thing to Believe Before Breakfast, eh?

****

Adam Cole,
717 Cherokee Ave., SE,
Atlanta, Georgia,
30315

Dear Mr. Sim,

I read your latest issue of *Cerebus*, and I've been reading all along before that. I have to admit I've learned some profound things about myself from reading what you've said. I think your observation about people who feel inadequate trying to solve their feelings by equalizing everything is really sharp; in fact, I see this tendency in my own writing.

The lesson for me is that, despite the fact that I find so much of what you say repugnant, I've found that having you expressing yourself clearly, and out in the open, and my listening to you and really trying to understand you, I've come to understand some profound things about myself.

So thank you for being brave and saying what you think.

Well, thank you for taking the time and trouble to let me know. You didn't say anywhere to not print your letter, so I'm printing it. Hope that's okay. Several interesting letters came in supporting my viewpoints expressed in "Tangent" whose authors very specifically asked that I not print their letter. Which I quite understand. The level of fear and paranoia which is generated by feminism (or any totalitarian belief system for that matter) is certainly the largest weapon in its arsenal. And I have no desire to expose any of my readers (against their will) to the level of ostracism, accusation and libelous and near-libelous insinuation which always results when anyone dares to express any dissent over feminism's overwhelming hegemony in our society (one of my anonymous correspondents, a playwright, mentioned the accusation of homosexuality which is so widely used by feminists in discussions to attempt to humiliate heterosexual men and to distract heterosexual men from the fact that feminist arguments have no logical or rational foundation. I always used to tell feminists who used the homosexual accusation, "I'd rather be a prick than a cunt" an observation which I consider to be comparable, both as a gratuitous insult and a complete non sequitur relative to the discussion at hand). Let me just say to all those men who are cowering in fear of feminist retribution that the truth is always stronger than whatever fear or paranoia can be generated by falsehood and that genuine bravery (in my experience) is only an ordeal when one is tempted (as all men are tempted) to behave in a cowardly fashion. Once the Rubicon has been crossed and it's "damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead" genuine bravery is downright exhilarating. Besides, being ostracized by feminists (as the same anonymous playwright pointed out to me) is like being "disinvited" to a party you were trying to figure out how not to attend without hurting anyone's feelings. Trust me, having absolutely no social contact with feminists has made my life a pleasure.

****

Jonathan White,
3 Rhanbuoy Close,
Carrickfergus
Northern Island,
BT38 8FF
United Kingdom,
Europe

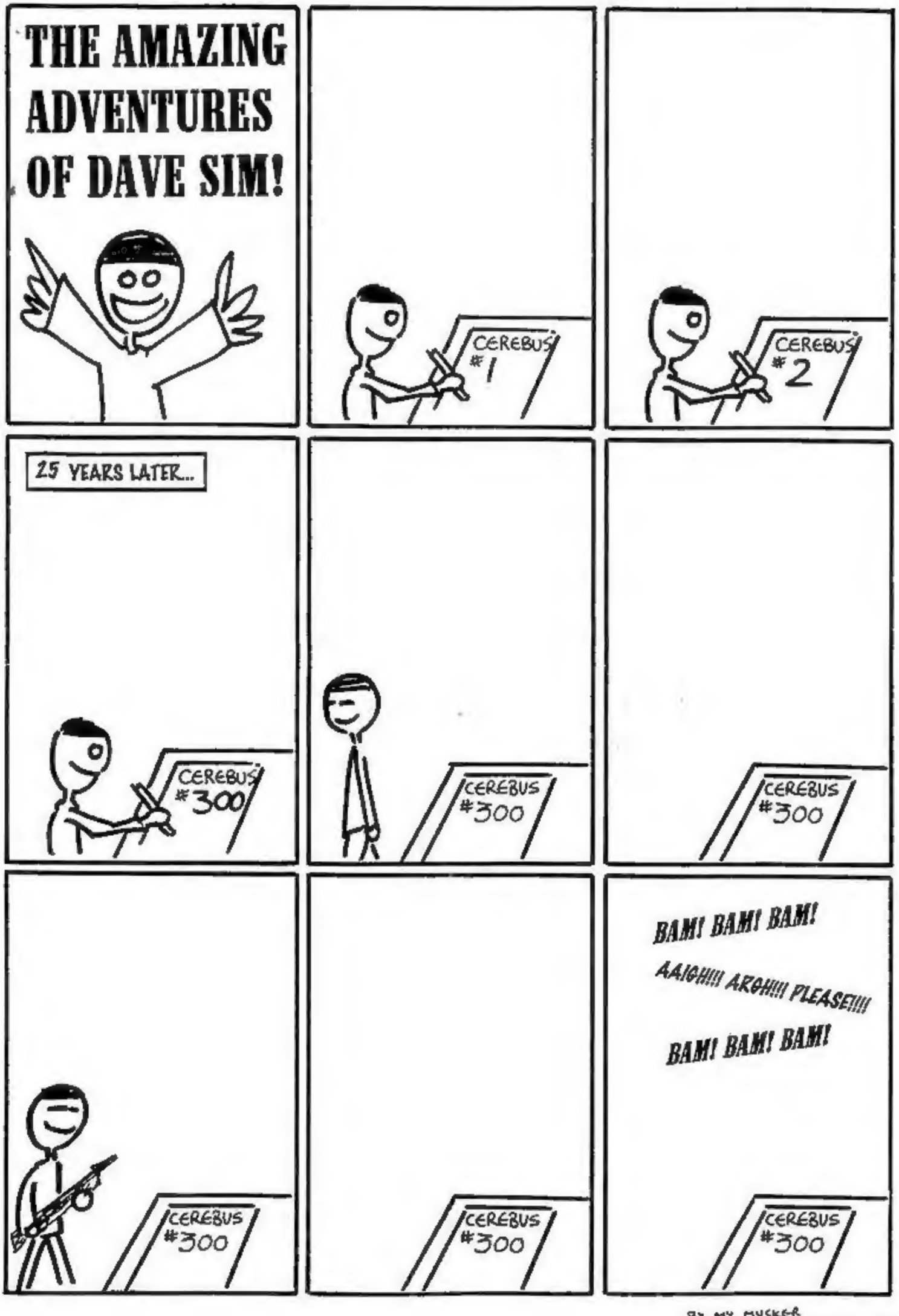
Dear Dave & Ger:

Keep up the great work—265 and 266 have been amazing! Three years as a shepherd! I also enjoyed "Tangent" (and so did my wife)—but we're a funny lot here in Northern Ireland.

I would be interested in any promotional material you have for *Form & Void*, having recently tracked down an uncut copy of the cover of *Church & State*, I'd be interested in anything similar.

I've been waiting for the right moment to tell Gerhard that we're going to do prints of his cover photos for Going Home *and* Form & Void, *but I just know he's going to dump all over the idea since he never thinks very much of anything that he does (seriously, I know. I don't get it either). Watch this space. Well, I mean, not this particular space in 268 since it doesn't really tell you anything. I mean, future instalments of "Aardvark Comment".*

Be sure and give your wife a great, big, wet and sloppy kiss and tell her it's from me.



BY MY MUCKER
MR. TIM BROWN, 2000

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